THE LIBRARY OF
THE WOMAN'S COLLEGE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO, N. C.

THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD

NEWS SHEET

FIFTH NUMBER

OCTOBER, 1950

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/movement-dance-and-drama_1950-10_5

CONTENTS

icers of the Guild.

itorial.

e Easter Dance Conference, 1950.

- Secretary's Report.
- Practical Sessions.
- Children's Classes.
- Movement Choir.
- Dr. Kosterlitz's Lecture.
- " Public Demonstration of Modern Dance."

ws from the Regions.

- Midlands.
- London.
- Manchester.
- West Riding.
- Bristol.
- Sussex.

icles—

- " The Need for Movement Experience and Dance in Present Day Education."
- " Impressions of a Member of a Regional Group."
- " The Art of Movement in the Bath Academy of Art."

OFFICERS OF THE GUILD

President :
RUDOLF LABAN

Vice–President :
F. C. LAWRENCE

Chairman :
LISA ULLMANN

Vice–Chairman :
SYLVIA BODMER

Council Members :

Corporate Members :
Marjorie Allen
Marjorie Bergin
Diana Jordan
Betty Meredith–Jones
Anthea Platt

Associate Members :
Hilda Brumof
Rolf Kosterlitz
Winifred Pledger
Kathleen Tansley
Lorna Wilson

Hon. Secretary :
GLADYS E. M. STEVENS,
64, Moor Lane,
Wilmslow, Cheshire.

Hon. Treasurer :
A. P. BURMAN,
76, Cross Street,
Manchester, 2.

Hon. Assistant Secretary :
ELSIE PALMER,
7, Brookdale Road,
Bramhall, Cheshire.

Membership Committee :
S. Bodmer
F. C. Lawrence
B. Meredith–Jones
E. Palmer
L. Ullmann

Publications Comittee :
M. Allen
M. Bergin (Editor)
R. Kosterlitz
A. Platt

EDITORIAL

In this issue of the News Sheet we have tried to do two things: irstly to enlarge the scope of the Sheet by including not only news, ut also more detailed accounts of members' activities and other rticles and items which, it is hoped, will be of interest; and secondly o reduce the cost of publication.

Guild Members may not perhaps be aware that the approximate ost of each copy of the News Sheet as hitherto produced was three hillings and threepence. In this issue we are increasing the number f copies printed so that, in addition to those supplied to members, surplus will be available which may be sold to non-members in rder to stimulate interest in the Guild, and the principles and work or which it stands.

From the various reports received of the activities of Regional Groups, it seems that these are flourishing. This is an encouraging ign, for it is only through the active participation of each individual nember of a society that it can live as a whole.

The publication of this News Sheet also depends upon the sup- ort of individual Guild members, and the Publications Committee vill therefore welcome all contributions, including articles, suggestions, riticisms, and queries. Any member of the Committee will be happy o receive these at any time. For your convenience, their names and ddresses are given herewith:—

Marjorie Allen, 10 Dalston Drive, Didsbury, Manchester, 20.

Marjorie Bergin, 111 Windmill Road, Brentford, Middlesex.

Rolf Kosterlitz, 110b Banbury Road, Oxford.

Anthea Platt, Boston House, Upper Carlisle Road, Eastbourne, Sussex.

THE EASTER DANCE CONFERENCE, 1950

The Conference was held from April 12th–14th in the L.C.C College of Physical Education, Paddington Street, London, W. Forty–five members enrolled, and only two were unable to attend.

It was with the greatest regret, and understanding that we learne that neither Mr. Laban nor Miss Ullmann could be with us this yea They both needed a well–deserved holiday. Very generously an graciously did Miss Bodmer and Mr. Lawrence take their places.

The Conference opened in glorious sunshine, and this year, fo the first time, the sense of strain felt at previous Conferences an General Meetings had gone. The Guild, it was felt, was losing it "growing pains."

All sessions were both successful and enjoyable. A record o each one, made by individual members is printed below.

A suggestion was made that our venue should be changed fo the 1951 Conference. In order to ascertain everyone's wishes in thi matter, all members were later circularised and asked to list in orde of preference the five places which had been put forward as possibl centres—London, Oxford, Stratford, Leeds and Matlock. The result of this ballot show an overwhelming majority in favour of London

It was suggested that certain London members might be able t offer hospitality, and for meeting place no happier one could be foun than the L.C.C. College of Physical Education where we met this yea

G. E. M. STEVENS.

PRACTICAL SESSIONS

The practical sessions which began each day's proceedings were aken by Miss Lilla Bauer.

The theme of the first of these was a delightful study based on arrowing and widening circles. We twisted and turned with vigour, nd as we paused, perspiring, Miss Bauer asked, " Any questions?"; nd then added disarmingly, " Any complaints?", and we were spurred n to renewed efforts.

The second session was concerned chiefly with rhythm, and nall groups worked out their own varied studies to a given rhythm.

Requests for the last session ranged from something lyrical (from nose who were stiff), to high leaps (from the energetic ones), and ncluded imaginative work. Each request was met, and then the whole as cleverly combined into a group dance.

We thank Miss Bauer for three delightful and varied sessions.

M.A.

CHILDREN'S CLASSES

On Wednesday, April 12th, opportunity was given for observing ovement done by two groups of children.

A class of 11–year–old girls was taken by Marjorie Bell who, as a sult of a suggestion previously made by the children, tried an inter– sting experiment in the association of colour and efforts. The child– n were given time for improvisation on these lines and from dividual movements a group sequence was built up.

The second class was a voluntary group of 13—15–year–old girls ken by Marjorie Bergin. This, too, was most interesting. The theme the first part of the lesson was growing and shrinking, using a asic shape. Improvising on this theme, each child became absorbed nd achieved a flow of movement which developed spontaneously into common rhythm. After this the girls showed us " The Good Samar– an," a dance–drama which had been created from their individual nprovisations out of which a set pattern and rhythm had grown.

Both classes stimulated a lively discussion, during which many nteresting points were raised, and it was generally felt that the fternoon had been extremely valuable.

K.T.

MOVEMENT CHOIR

During the session taken by Miss Bodmer, a lively dance was uilt up from the contrasting themes of strength and lightness

which were developed into the form of a landler and a waltz. Most of us found it difficult to dance the former without stamping, but Miss Bodmer soon showed us that it is quite possible to mark accents in strength without making a sound and that stamping often indicates a feeling of weakness rather than a real inner strength.

The dance began with a set theme in couples, continued with a central group developed and finished with a very exciting "festival" where we improvised gaily (forgetting all about strength and lightness!), but nevertheless thoroughly enjoying the conclusion to a most interesting and stimulating session.

G.M.S.

THE APPLICATION OF MOVEMENT TO THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

An extremely interesting Lecture on this subject was given at the Easter Conference by Dr. Rolf Kosterlitz, who began by telling us that despite the tremendous contribution made by such pioneers as Freud and Jung to psychological medicine, it is still in its infancy.

Dr. Kosterlitz stated that so close is the connection between body and mind, the body being the means of expression for the mind, that any psychological disorder will be revealed in movement. Just as one's handwriting is individual, so is one's movement.

Considering the possible causes of phychological disorder, Dr. Kosterlitz spoke of an "inhibition of expressive movement" (i.e., the inability to express the mind by means of the body). This inhibition will have repercussions on the whole personality, and may be manifested in some kind of conflict. Dr. Kosterlitz stressed that any outward manifestation of inner disturbance can only be understood in relation to the individual as a whole. He showed that a certain result, for example, an inaccurate aim by a gunman at a target, may be due to quite different reasons. Inadequate training, lack of aptitude, lack of concentration, emotional disturbance, or a combination of any of these may be contributory factors.

If someone has a strong desire to be or to do something for which he is constitutionally unsuited, he will be in a constant state of conflict. A man may have a great urge for self-assertion and yet lack sufficient vitality to enable him to gratify it. In this case, it would be necessary to seek the cause of the urge for assertion; and, as the vitality is insufficient to sustain it, to attempt to lower the desire.

In attempting to use movement to treat psychological disorder there are two tasks to be done: to discharge what is exaggerated, and to provide compensation or re-education. An urge for self-assertion can find an outlet in assertive movements, but, on the other hand,

oo much of this may exaggerate instead of liberating the urge.

Compensating movements more humble in feeling are also needed, ut if given too soon may result in frustration rather than sublima- ion. For one type of disorder, the continuity of a circular shape may ave a soothing effect, while for another it might become almost bsessional. The balance between these two opposites is a very elicate one.

Although a little can be done to treat psychological disorder by pplying movement in this way, Dr. Kosterlitz emphasised that it is urely external, and that the cause of the disorder or maladjustment nust be sought if any fundamental change or cure is hoped for. Move- ent can only be applied when the "general architecture of the ersonality" is understood.

Thus, the psychologist and the movement trainer must combine nd work together for the solution of their common problems.

M.K.B.

PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF MODERN DANCE

A special committee of the Guild was recently set up to consider he problems involved in showing movement and educational dance, as ve understand it, to the general public, such as parents and teachers.

The points discussed included the placing of the class in relation o the audience, the desirability of explanation in the form of talks, and he general content of the demonstration, including the use of planned nd of spontaneous work.

It was felt that Guild members might find it helpful to see and iscuss a sample demonstration of this kind. Accordingly, Sheila Aste nd Joan Russell very kindly arranged one between them, and gave t at the Easter Conference. It was not possible on this occasion to se children, but Guild members took part, and both performers and nlookers found it a most stimulating experience.

The practical class was preceded by talks on the aims and ethods of Modern Educational Dance. Both talks were clear and omprehensive; one is printed elsewhere in the News Sheet.

After the class a discussion took place, and many interesting oints were raised. Amongst these were the place of explanation in he lesson, the use of music and percussion, the desirability or other- vise of holding a discussion with the audience, the necessity for a lear development in the lesson, the possibilities of different age groups, nd whether any particular aspect of the work should be stressed, or whether an attempt should be made to show it as a whole. It was enerally felt that much thought needs to be given to these and other natters discussed.

We do not underestimate the difficulty of bringing the general ublic to a realisation of the value of Modern Educational Dance. It

is no scintillating display of virtuosity, but a gradual growth, and the process of growth is not visible or tangible. However, if we ourselves sincerely believe in the value of our work, we must be prepared to equip ourselves as best we can to show its merits to others.

We should like to record our thanks to Sheila Aste and Joan Russell for an enjoyable and helpful session, and our appreciation of all the hard work involved in its preparation.

L.V.F.

THE NEED FOR MOVEMENT, EXPERIENCE AND DANCE IN PRESENT EDUCATION

Movement is fundamental to life since we are continually moving to carry out our daily tasks. Think of the activities involved in lighting a fire: chopping wood, shovelling coal, and laying the fire. Again we use movement to add emphasis to our conversation, to stress a point.

This fundamental, movement, should not then be neglected in our modern schemes of education, which have as their aim a full and balanced development of the child's whole personality, physical, mental and emotional.

What is movement? It is the outward expression of one's inner attitude or intention. Think of a public speaker. He may be angry, using thrusting, driving movements; placating, calming and smoothing down his audience, or nervous, fluttering his papers about. His movements will vary according to his feelings. By studying people's movements one can learn more about them, and use this knowledge to adjust one's approach to them. This is especially important for all who are dealing with children.

Conversely, varied outward movement expression will enrich inner experience. For instance, an entirely different inner feeling will arise when lifting the whole body with an upward intention, from when clenching the fists and drawing into oneself.

In movement education we work on three principal aspects. Firstly we give effort training; secondly we develop a feeling for space and shape; and thirdly we give experience in group relationships.

These can be considered in turn. Every movement we make has an effort quality. Smoothing down your coat or your neighbour differs from wringing your handkerchief or tapping your neighbour. Although effort training develops skill in performing everyday actions so that economy of movement results, it is given principally to develop harmony and sensitivity in movement, and to give experience of qualities other than an individual's more habitual ones. The thruster, for instance, will need the experience of softer movements, and the dabber more sustained ones. For, just as when painting we use light and shade, and variations of texture in order to convey a particular

expression, so we do similarly in movement. In this connection we base our work on a skeleton of eight basic effort-actions, which, being balanced in qualities give this harmonious development.

The second aspect to be considered is space experience. Whenever we move, in addition to using an appropriate effort quality we go out into the space around us. Very often, children—especially those living in cities where houses, schools and streets are crowded, and conditions cramped—have little awareness of the space around them, and are in need of opportunities to find that they can move in many directions away from themselves. As we move in space we make a certain shape which, like the effort quality is indicative of personality and an inner attitude. If we think again of the public speaker; he may be pompous, presenting a wall-like front; he may thrust and pierce with arrow-like movements; or he may nervously withdraw into himself. He may stress his points with sharp, angular movements as he presents a balanced, carefully worded discourse.

Here then, again our aim is to give variety in experience, both in moving freely in space, and in using different shapes so that harmony is achieved.

So far we have been concerned with the individual, but we do not live alone with only inanimate objects to deal with. The approach to living things immediately brings in fresh considerations, and this approach is largely coloured by one's attitude towards them. If you like cats you will stroke them, so that they will respond with purring and rubbing against you; while if you seize one and push it outside the door, it will probably spit and scratch. With other people one meets on a common basis and this is, perhaps, one of our biggest adjustments in everyday life. We find that we must make the right approach at the right moment to build up a certain relationship. We have to learn to respect each other's moods, and respond accordingly, and to be tolerant, if harmony and not friction is to result. In the third aspect of our work, group relationships, we can, through movement in groups with a common purpose, sometimes leading, sometimes being led, help the child in his social behaviour, and in learning to live harmoniously with others, and to give and take. This is particularly valuable in the upper part of a school with its obvious carry-over into adult life.

So far, I have spoken about the content of the movement experience. Now we will consider the method. Methods in education have been pictured in three ways: "Jug-Mug"; "Potter-Clay"; and "Gardener-Plant." The first is concerned with pouring information or experience into the child; the second with moulding him into some ideal pattern: (this, in movement, if over-stressed, leads to the imposition of a style); while the third has as its aim the nurturing of the child's latent capacities. We use all these three methods to a certain extent, for sometimes it is necessary to pour in, and to mould, since we cannot, in a lifetime, experience everything at first hand. But our emphasis is on the third way, for the true meaning of "to educate"

is to nourish and to nurture. This image of the gardener with his watering, pruning, digging and improving the soil at the proper season gives a picture of the way in which we encourage the child to develop his own style at his own rate; for children, like plants cannot be lumped into one category.

So working on these aspects of effort–training, space awareness and group relationships in this way, we aim at developing balanced harmonious personalities able to fit more readily and happily into a complex modern world.

JOAN RUSSELL.

EASTER CONFERENCE, 1951

If any members have any special wishes or suggestions to make for the 1951 Conference, these will be most welcome. Please send them to: Miss G. E. M. Stevens, 64 Moor Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire.

BOOK LIST

Members may find the following books of interest:—

"World History of the Dance," by Kurt Sachs; published by Allen and Unwin (Price 25/–).

"Effort," by Rudolf Laban; published by Macdonald and Evans (Price 10/–).

"Modern Educational Dance," by Rudolf Laban; published by Macdonald and Evans (Price 8/6).

"The Mastery of Movement on the Stage," by Rudolf Laban; published by Macdonald and Evans (Price 30/–).

"The Art of Movement in Education, Industry, and on the Stage"; booklet obtainable from the Art of Movement Studio, 183–5, Oxford Road, Manchester 13 (Price 1/6).

"Story of a School"; H.M.S.O. (Price 1/–),

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD: MIDLANDS AREA.

Report of the Meeting held on Saturday, June 10th, at the City of Birmingham Training College.

Though numbers were small, this was a very enjoyable meeting. In the afternoon we danced, with Sheila Carstairs leading. She took a delightful study, based on "opening and closing" in the three planes of the A Scale. It says much for the interest Sheila created that in spite of the heat of the afternoon, we were reluctant to break for tea at 4.15 p.m.

From the letters of apology which were read at the beginning of the discussion which followed tea, we felt that another meeting was likely to be better attended. We therefore made a tentative arrangement for Saturday, September 30th.

The following programme was mapped out:

2.30—4.15. Movement. Leader: Eileen Akester.
4.15. Tea.
5.00. Discussion re subsequent meetings.
6.30. Theatre party to Birmingham Rep.

During the discussion on possible subsequent meetings, it was felt that something concrete might be done to encourage applications for membership of the Guild. Two valuable suggestions were put forward, and unanimously supported. They were:

(a) that at one of our subsequent meetings we should act as hostesses to members of the Midlands Dance Group, and other individuals interested in Dance.
(b) that one of our subsequent meetings should be arranged to coincide with that of the Midlands Dance Group, and the practical sessions of this meeting should run jointly.

It was also decided that the expenses incurred in holding this inaugural meeting should be met by a donation from those attending. Any subsequent expenses will need to be discussed at further meetings.

One point of general interest was that the Midlands Junior Dance Group met, with Kay Tansley leading in the same building at the same time. It was a very pleasant experience to see so many children enjoying tea in the College Common Room with us. We hope that this "happy accident" may recur.

E.A.

OTHER MIDLANDS NEWS

THE MIDLANDS DANCE GROUP.

A "revival" meeting of the Group was held in Birmingham on Saturday, July 15th, when Betty Meredith Jones came to teach us.

In spite of a rather smaller attendance than we had hoped for we had one of our most enjoyable sessions, and were loth to finish when the time came.

At the business meeting which followed the practical session it was decided that the time had come for us to join up in some way with the newly-formed L.A.M.G. Regional Group, and at the next meeting in September we hope to combine and discuss plans for the future.

The Junior Dance Group

Two very happy meetings have been held this year, one in Kidderminster and one in Birmingham. The first was led by Eileen Akester and the second by Kay Tansley. On both occasions children of thirteen to fifteen years were drawn from different schools, including modern, commercial and grammar schools. This venture seems to be proving as successful as it promised to be when we started it two years ago, in spite of a lapse during last year, when no meetings were held. We hope to meet once a term, at Worcester, Birmingham or Kidderminster.

If anyone in the Midlands would like further information about either group, do please contact Miss K. Tansley, 191, Heeley Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, 29.

"MOVEMENT EVENING"

On the evenings of May 24th and 25th, sixty men and women students and tutors of the City of Birmingham Training College took part in a somewhat experimental programme under the title "Movement Evening." This included English Country and European National Dance (for men and women), Dance Movement (women only), and Dance Mime (men and women); and an experimental production of the witches scenes from "Macbeth" (men and women). The experiment was from the point of view of the audience, as well as for those taking part, and appeared to be successful from that aspect.

Perhaps the most encouraging side of the evening was that so many men enjoyed taking part. All the performers were drawn from voluntary groups of men and women; and it was from such a group particularly interested in dramatic and stage movement that those taking part in the Dance Mime and the witches scenes items were drawn.

As the person responsible for the evening and for the voluntary groups interested, I would say that, although the performances for students and tutors and their friends were valuable and interesting, the spontaneous and creative work done before a production was

thought of was of infinitely greater importance to the people taking part. The "performance" and the preparation necessary re-introduced to some degree the self-consciousness (particularly with the women) which the preliminary work had broken down.

However, we all enjoyed the fun of dressing up, and the glamour of grease-paint and footlights, and there was a very happy group feeling in the team work entailed.

EILEEN AKESTER.

LONDON AREA

Our first meeting was held on Friday, May 19th, and about a dozen members were present.

We discussed the possibility of having outside people and other groups coming to our meetings to keep our group alive to modern activities and current ideas. This was almost unanimously agreed upon with the amendment that we should become an established group first with our own aims and ideas, and that the purpose of the first few meetings (with the exception of lectures) should be mainly to get to know each other and to establish a good working basis for future developments. We decided to run the group on not too formal lines and to ask Miss Heath to be our treasurer. A collection was made towards the expenses of hiring a room for the next meeting.

Belinda Quiry very kindly agreed to open the second meeting with a lecture-demonstration on 18th Century Historical Dance.

This meeting, held on Monday, June 19th, was much better attended than the first one, and all present were very interested in the clear and charmingly presented lecture, which was also illustrated by some dancing which showed the excellent footwork of that time.

In future we hope to meet on the first Wednesday of each month, and anyone who would like further particulars of these meetings is invited to get into touch with one of the following:—

Marjorie Bergin, 111, Windmill Road, Brentford, Middx.
Hilda Brumof, 37, Adamson Road, London, N.W.3.
Adda Heynssen, 268, Gloucester Terrace, London, W.2.

MANCHESTER

The Manchester Dance Circle

The Manchester Dance Circle has had another enjoyable and successful year, with an increased membership. Under the able leadership of Miss Sylvia Bodmer and Miss Geraldine Stephenson, the weekly practical classes during the winter session were much enjoyed. Our grateful thanks to both of them for the trouble they took and

for the happy experience in movement, together with the delightful dances they gave us.

The Associate Meetings were greatly appreciated by regular enthusiasts who much enjoyed these opportunities for discussion and interchange of views.

We are particularly grateful to Miss Bodmer for her hospitality, and for the interesting meetings held in her house: also for a highly entertaining and profitable class in Percussion.

Two major events proved of interest to a number of people outside the circle. One was a Christmas party, which included group dancing and a "Bring and Buy" sale to help our decreasing funds. The other was a Children's Festival held in the summer, an account of which will be found below.

Mr. Albrecht Knust's Visit to Manchester

An interesting event in the Manchester area this summer was the arrival of Mr. Albrecht Knust, a former pupil of Mr. Laban, who has specialised in the Laban Kinetography.

Opportunity was given for a number of us in the area to attend his classes in Notation, and all feel they have derived much profit from them. The discovery that Notation can be used in any field of movement was most enlightening. Its application in recording movement not only in dance, but also, for example, in sport proved very interesting. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Knust for his excellent tuition, and for the way he helped us further to understand the very important study of Movement Notation.

DANCE FESTIVAL

The year's activities of the Manchester Dance Circle were brought to a fitting conclusion by a Dance Festival in which children, members of the Circle and many interested friends took part. It gave much pleasure to have present Mr. Laban and Mr. Knust (who is over from Germany in connection with his work on Kinetography).

Two groups of senior girls, taken by Maureen Leon and Cecilia Bagley showed dances and dance mimes, and a class of senior boys was taken for a typical lesson by Len Fulford. The work with boys was a welcome innovation to those interested in the introduction of such movement in schools, and their response, enthusiasm and tremendous output of energy caused much comment. All the children showed a high degree of concentration, absorption and enjoyment, which confirmed afresh the belief in the value of such work in education.

The meeting was concluded by a "warming-up" taken by Geraldine Stephenson and a group dance taken by Sylvia Bodmer, in

both of which many of the children as well as the adult visitors joined. So, in lively mood typical of the Circle's weekly meetings, an excellent festive ending was made to a most successful afternoon.

JOAN RUSSELL.

WEST RIDING

The West Riding Movement Study Circle held its Annual General Meeting in Leeds in March. It was decided that the group should divide for sessional meetings into two parts, one group meeting in the northern part, and one in the southern part of the Riding, and that occasional joint meetings should be arranged.

Anyone interested in joining either branch of the West Riding Circle should write to:

Miss Green, Armthorpe Secondary Modern Girls' School, Armthorpe, near Doncaster, in the south; or

Mr. Squires, 6, Mill Gate, Bingley, in the north.

Each branch meets once a term, and guest teachers are invited.

There is also a group which meets in Harrogate fortnightly, which would welcome anyone interested.

Information can be obtained from Miss V. Bruce, Beechwood, Cold Bath Road, Harrogate.

BRISTOL

The Bristol Group, formed in November, 1949, held regular weekly meetings until the end of April, 1950, when it was decided to discontinue classes until September. There were about twenty-one members, and a loyal nucleus kept the class alive during the worst weather and when lots of illness was about. Although we have not made any money, we have covered expenses.

We held an Open Evening in quite an informal way in March. Betty Meredith-Jones led the group in Basic Movement. Rain came down in torrents, and we were afraid of the consequences, but about thirty-five people came, twenty-five to perform and ten to watch. I am sure all performers enjoyed themselves, and spectators were most interested.

We have not yet planned our winter programme. I hope this will include some National Dances and studies, all of which can be approached in the Modern Dance way. Perhaps later we shall be able to work out a story in dance. Whatever plans we do ultimately decide upon, we hope to make them sufficiently flexible to be adapted to the needs of the group as a whole.

E.G.

SUSSEX

Miss Sinden is running movement classes in connection with the Lewes Theatre Club, and has been responsible for the movement in several of their productions.

Anyone interested in these, or other classes in this area, please get in touch with Miss Joy Sinden, The Limes, Ditchling, Sussex.

IMPRESSIONS OF A MEMBER OF A REGIONAL GROUP

In November, 1949, a few enthusiasts met in Bristol, and decided to form a Dance Group. This was an event to which I had been looking forward for many years, and I have eagerly watched each moment of the group's young life.

What is the aim of such a group? Is it to remain an enthusiastic nucleus of those who have already been introduced to the joys of Modern Dance, or is it to bring in those from the highways and byways who can contribute much and gain much from experience with folk who have been guided to move in the Laban way?

There is no doubt about the answer. No one interested in educational dance as we know it, can wish to tread a narrow path. The responsibility may be with the dance groups that are beginning. It is therefore most important that each group plans a programme that will not only suit existing members, but will attract new ones.

Every new form of life, whether it be the life of a group or of an individual, has its "growing pains" We in Bristol have had ours, but there is no danger of life becoming extinct. I rather think that our mistakes of the first season will serve to strengthen us in the future.

Twenty-two members enrolled, most of whom were teachers, which was to be expected at the beginning. We were extremely fortunate in having Betty Meredith-Jones and Dorothy Sydenham to lead the classes. The headmistress of the school in whose gymnasium we met, helped in a most practical way by charging a reduced rental.

Most of the work taken was basic movement, with the use of a tambour. We sometimes had a pianist. While this was enjoyed to the full by experienced movers, beginners were rather lost, became frightened, and some did not come back to us.

I feel that the more experienced mover has a special responsibility in a group of this kind. Her movement is naturally more fluent than that of those who have not had a similar background, and she needs to bring to movement or dance classes a very wide sympathy so that newcomers will feel that it is an advantage to have such members among them, and not be discouraged by what may appear to them to be a higher standard of performance than that of which they themselves feel capable.

Newcomers must be helped to realise that ease of body manipulation is only one factor in expressive movement. It is possible for movement performed with great physical skill to be comparatively inexpressive, due to a lack of inner participation. On the other hand a complete beginner, however clumsily she may feel she is moving, will, if her movement has sincerity, be expressive, and will be contributing in a positive way to the development of the group.

These observations are those of one who was first introduced to Modern Dance in 1938, and who has been an ardent disciple ever since. My first holiday course was at Sheffield one Christmas. I came away rather discouraged, my mind befogged. Now, after twelve years' experience in movement, the mists begin to clear. Should any beginner feel confused, let her take heed, and move on!

ENA GLIDE.

THE ART OF MOVEMENT IN THE BATH ACADEMY OF ART

The Bath Academy was installed at Corsham Court four years ago by the principal, Mr. Clifford Ellis. Since then the numbers have increased rapidly, and there are now one hundred and fifty men and women students, of whom about half take a two-year training as art teachers, while the others take the Ministry of Education's four year course in Design. Opportunities for studying other arts besides the visual arts are liberally provided, and most students learn to sing or to play an instrument, and many come voluntarily to dance.

For the first three years the dance training at the Academy has been chiefly influenced by ballet, and Mr. Laban's theories of movement have been introduced only during the last year.

A great deal of the students' work takes the form of combined studies which continue throughout the day. The art of movement is linked with drawing to form a movement and drawing class, and here the students begin the day by experiencing certain aspects of moving, illustrated later by the model, so that they become more aware of the different tensions, twists and shapes the body can assume.

During each term there is an emphasis on the study of a particular century, and this study combines with stage and costume design, with movement and sound to form a production in which the students recreate a certain aspect of the century in their own way. This also continues during a whole day.

The student teachers have a period of movement training each week, but this does not give adequate time for their own experience and enjoyment as well as for developing the understanding necessary for teaching children. Many of them supplement this by coming to voluntary classes once or twice a week which helps them considerably. Some of the first year students began teaching movement under careful supervision during their second term, and all thirty-six men

and women students taught with very little supervision during their third term, taking mixed classes in village schools nearby. During the last two terms of their second year, students can specialise in three subjects, for each of which they have a whole day. Those who choose to take dance therefore have one day a week for two terms, and include dance in their final three weeks teaching practice in secondary schools.

Besides contributing to drawing, stage production and education, movement and dance are experienced for their own sake in voluntary classes, the pianists for which are students who can improvise. Basic movement and its development into dance appears to interest the men and women first year students equally. During this last term staff and students worked together on two ballets, for which the music was specially composed and played by the Academy orchestra. Settings, costumes, lighting and dances were all created mostly during spare time.

Instead of producing an outdoor entertainment this summer, students have been designing and carrying out the interior decoration of a newly-opened hostel, making wall coverings, curtains, bedspreads, lamp-shades and ash trays, painting furniture and woodwork and executing murals, reliefs and sculpture. Also part of this scheme of work, in preparation for an International Architectural summer school, has been the designing and making of playground furniture; this includes a wood and rope climbing construction hanging from a tree and fixed to the ground: which is fun to climb and a pleasure to look at.

One of the interesting combined studies made here is that of biology and art, where the students derive a rich and inexhaustible source of patterns and designs from natural form. Here, as in other studies, they learn to observe sensitively, and to find inspiration from the life going on around them. One hopes that their experience of movement will also stimulate them to a greater degree of perceptiveness and develop their awareness and appreciation of the manifold patterns and rhythms which surround them.

VERONICA TYNDALE-BISCOE.

ERRATUM

We regret that, in the February issue of the News Sheet, in the account of the birthday party celebrating Mr. Laban's 70th birthday, Mr. Lawrence's speech is incorrectly reported: " . . . he pursued a life of more or less assured comfort on the road to discovery " should read " he gave up a life of more or less assured comfort . . ."